Patrika

Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles

OCTOBER 2014

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CHINMAYA MISSION LOS ANGELES

Vedanta, Wisdom, Spiritual Growth

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Over Thirty Years Of Service To Humanity

Upcoming Events

CORP Event: Roadmap to Future
Presentation by Ashwin Rangan

Nov 23 9:05 am - 10:10 am
12:05 pm - 1:10 pm

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Thus Spake The Master

To be patient means to suffer something that hinders or hurts us,
and still retain our self-composure.
How many difficulties, with their consequent unpleasantness and discord,
could be smoothed over
and almost entirely eliminated by patience.
Patience always elevates and strengthens our character.
We need it not only with others but also with ourselves.

- Swami Chinmayananda

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THINK!

***Ideal*Is for Life**

Immediate results by smart and hard work
Delightful joy by hearty laughter
Enduring energy by healthy workout
Astute learning by focused attention
Lasting peace by quickly letting go

- Swami Ishwarananda

For e-Satsang blog, click here

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Annakshetra Opens, *Annam* Explained, *Annakoot* Enjoyed

Chinmaya Rameshwaram, on Oct.25, opened its newly renovated and expanded '*Annakshetra*.' Appropriately enough, the several pujas and prayers were interspersed with a Vedantic talk on *Annam* by Swami Ishwarananda, an Annakoot and a hearty meal for all attendees.

The inaugural of the facility, dedicated to Gurudev on the occasion of the birth centenary celebrations, began in the morning with pujas on the ground floor of the 3,000 square feet dining hall which can now accommodate 300 people and includes a kitchen. CMLA volunteers were led by Pt. Sivaramakrishnan of the Sanatan Dharma temple in the Navagraha, Vastu and Lakshmi pujas.

The gathering then moved outside, to the entrance of the two level dining hall, flanked by ornate pillars to witness a short ritual and prayer.

After this, Swamiji announced the three who would cut the inaugural ribbon and remarkably, they were all ladies: Viji Mahadev who is known to every CMLA member, having been associated with the Mission and being a force along with Acharya Mahadevji from its inception in Southern California; Rekha Acharya a long time volunteer, known for her dedication to CMLA and Sharada Iyer who has quietly supported her husband, Dr.Srinivasa Iyer as he spent countless hours upgrading Rameshwaram, including the current project. The honor of opening the stairway to the second level was given as a mark of respect to Swamiji's mother.

The crowd once upstairs, witnessed a Krishna puja and participated in the chanting of the 'Ganesha Atharvashirsha,' 'Purusha Suktam,' and 'Narayana Suktam' led by the 'Chinmayanjali' group of students. Sweet bhajans were then offered by Ranjani Iyer, a young parent of child in CMLA's CEEP program. With Shekhar Ekbote on tabla and Raj Mantha on the harmonium, hearts were touched by the musical renderings of "Gokula Bala" and "Chandrasekara Isha."

Given that it was the dining hall that was being inaugurated, Swamiji spoke on the significance of food or *annam* and the *annakoot*. He talked of the young Brighu in the Taittiriya Upanishad approaching his father and asking what Brahman was. The wise Varuni's response: annam, prana, chakshu, srodhram, manas, vaak.

Meditation on annam- the very first aspect, Swamiji said, brings forth the understanding that the life-breath is food. All beings on earth, he said, are born of food, are sustained by food and end as food for another being. For the physical body, prana is annam. For air, the body is annam.

In a similar vein, Swamiji touched upon all the panchabhutas and explained their coexistence, pointing out that the world is nothing but food for something, and necessary for sustenance. The one who understands this coexistence, he said, has understood Brahman. That is why, the seers ascribed divinity to food and Annalakshmi is worshipped.

With this understanding, he said, it was imperative to follow the injunctions in the Upanishad: don't ever turn away from serving food, serve with courtesy and joy. The scriptures, Swamiji said, makes it clear that how one offers food in the early stages of life is how one will consume food in the last stages of life! The practice of sharing food is time immemorial and communal consumption is what the annakut is all about.

To not waste food is to also respect it, and an important dictum, Swamiji said, especially for the young in the audience.

After this Swamiji recognized Dr.Iyer with a token of appreciation and the latter thanked those who had extended support in completing the project in a record three months. He spoke briefly on the work that was done and the challenges in acquiring city permits for the construction. He pointed out that the facility was for the community and non CMLA members would be welcome to take advantage of it.

Also recognized was Francisco who labored along with his family to complete a lot of the building. The final speaker was Acharya Mahadevanji who lauded the volunteers for their dedication and said CMLA took great pride in them.

The event concluded with arati to Gurudev and Mahaprasad for all.

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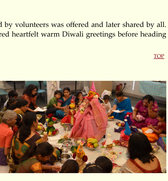
Seniors Enjoy Varied Activities at Monthly Meet

Seniors gathered at the newly opened Annakshetra at Rameshwaram on Oct 23 and enjoyed their October monthly meeting at CMLA, encapsulating as it did, spirituality, music, art and issues of health.

It began with Swami Ishwarananda speaking on "Wisdom of Light." He emphasized the value of devotion and attachment to god alone. For achieving and sustaining brilliance he said learning from saints, reveling in the stories of the lord, serving the guru, trusting in the words of mantras and japas, being content with what one has, not finding fault in others, and dealing with everyone uniformly without any hidden agenda or bad intentions, would be appropriate.

Dr. Vijaya Cherukuri who gave a presentation on 'Modern Trends in Dentistry', emphasized the effect of dental health in relation to overall health. She highlighted the advantages of dental implants over traditional bridges and how technology has enabled accurate dentures to be made available instantly. The most inexpensive and easy way to improve our smile is to use whiteners, she said.



Whiteners or no, Anupama Kalle brought huge smiles as in a little more than an hour, she had the seniors produce wonderful paintings of a peacock. Her step-by-step instructions were easy to follow, and as she had promised to earlier, even those who thought they had no painting skill or experience, wound up taking home nice paintings.

Young and upcoming Hindustani classical singer Sushma Bharadwaj, together with tabla maestro Hemant Ekbote gave a wonderful session of classical songs and bhajans. Ashok Bala provided harmonium support.

As always, the seniors were effusive in their thanks to CMLA volunteers for organizing the event.

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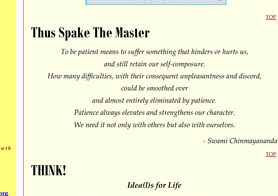
Valley BV Revels As CM Family During Diwali Festivities

The Valley Balavihar Diwali celebrations at the Valley Hindu Temple was both, a grand and homey affair. Parents and students began arriving before the scheduled start of 3pm, cheerful and excited about what was to come.

But even before all that, dedicated teachers and parent volunteers had arrived to set up, in the multi purpose room, clay diyas to paint and supplies to make Diwali banners with jingling bells, while others organized a wide array of food.



Once seated, everyone was instructed to start crafting to their heart's desire. The room was filled with laughter, ideas of what to paint, and a feeling of happiness. An hour into crafting students and parents, lined up to eat. The delicious lunch buffet included a variety of dishes including samosas, bhel puri, fruits and drinks. Everyone enjoyed their meal while talking to friends.

Everyone then gathered in a spirit of gratefulness in the main temple to participate in arati led by coordinators and balavihar teachers. There was only one word to describe everyone singing 'Om Jai Jagadeesh' and singing Pujya Gurudev's arati: family. In that moment one could really see what it means to come every Sunday and be with people who cherish their Hindu culture.

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Prayer and Learning at San Gabriel While Celebrating Diwali

Children at the San Gabriel Balavihar learned of the significance of Lakshmi Puja as they sat in front of an image of the goddess especially set up at the altar and sought blessings from the Divine Mother.

Prasad cooked by volunteers was offered and later shared by all. Everyone shared heartfelt warm Diwali greetings before heading back home.

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Diwali Gaieties at Redlands BV

The young tots of Redlands Balavihar participated in conducting a puja to the mother goddess. Volunteers had fashioned an image of Devi with fabric, flowers and coconut and the kids were amazed to see the material all come together to represent the Divine.

The young students also participated at the Inland Empire Diwali event that was conducted by the Riverside temple. The Shruti group sang bhajans and stole the hearts of the listeners.

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Fun and Feast at Brea BV During Diwali Celebrations

On Nov.2, the Brea balavihar officially welcomed the families who have newly enrolled this year.

Each family came forward and spoke briefly about themselves and their reasons for joining CMLA's Balavihar program.

On the occasion and to mark Diwali, a pot luck dinner was organized. There was laughter and bonhomie as everyone mingled and enjoyed the delicious food items.

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New Parents' Orientation

CMLA, on Oct.18, held a new Balavihar parent orientation. The center has 150 new families this year. Those who availed of the opportunity to attend, learned about Chinmaya Mission, about the vision of Balavihar and personally interacted with Swamiji.

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